2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

(*Coregonus leucichtys, C. Omul, C. Muksun, C. clupoides*), the chief catch of the natives on the shores of Okhotsk and Bering seas consists of salmon of the genus *Oncorhynchus;* the dog salmon (*O. lagocephalus* or *O. keta*), the humpback salmon (*O. proteus* or *O. horbusha*), the red salmon (*O. lycaodon* or *O. niarka*), the chawicha (*Salmo orientalis*), and some others. With the migrating fish coming from the Arctic Ocean belong also the starlet (*Acipenser ruthenus*) and the sturgeon (*Acipenser sturio*). 136

Many coregonidae and other species of fish live continuously in the Arctic rivers and in the numerous tundra lakes.

Population of the Polar Region

The population to the north of the Verkhoyansk Ridge is very small. This region has only 0.01 man to a quadratic mile, or 1 man to 100 square miles. Settlements are confined to the river valleys and the shores of large lakes abounding in fish. The tundra dweller of Siberia seldom settles on the seacoast or on the adjacent islands, as do the American Eskimo. Since off shore the sea is quite shallow the hunting of sea mammals has not been developed; for instance, the ocean between the mouth of the Kolyma River and the Sviatoi Nos to the west is only seven meters deep at a distance of ten or twenty miles from shore. West of the Chukchee are no sea-going peoples and no skin boats. Late in the fall, when snowstorms begin to rage on the tundra, the nomadic natives wander southward to the protection of the forests. 161 634 131 [361]

The Chukchee and Yukaghir are regarded as indigenous tribes of the region. The Tungus were forced to the Arctic region when the Yakut, migrating from the south, occupied Yakut Province. In their turn, the Yakut crossed the Verkhoyansk Ridge when the Russian conquerors invaded the Lena country and were followed to the Arctic region by Russians who settled at the mouths of the rivers. The climate is unfit for agriculture, but the Yakut introduced horned cattle and horses. Cattle-breeding, however, also encounters many obstacles: the grasses are of poor quality, the haying and fishing seasons coincide, and for nine months of the year the soil is covered with a deep layer of snow. In spite of the abundance of fish, famines are frequent, owing to lack of cooperation, methods of conservation, and foresight. The basic economic foundation of Arctic Siberia is the domesticated reindeer. The Yakut, as well as all the other tribes of the region, both aboriginal and immigrant, are endeavoring to acquire the reindeer, an important factor in their welfare. [221] [511]

2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902)1933 RV2Yakut AV2
HISTORICAL SIBERIA RR2

HISTORY OF CONTACT WITH RUSSIANS

y 173 The Yakut once lived in southern Cis-Baikalia and earlier, possibly, in the Sayan Mountains. Under pressure from the Mongol-Buryat, they wandered into the Lena Valley occupied by Tungus tribes, whom they forced to retreat from the valley into the mountains. These events which occurred in the thirteenth or fourteenth century of our era, naturally could not be recorded in the old Russian annals. Our information is based on oral traditions, preserved among the Yakut.

HS 175 651 y 175 We have previously noted (see p. 64) that the Yakut were subjugated by two different Cossack parties from Mangasey aand Yeniseisk. The Olekminsk fortress on the Lena River was erected in 1630 when only Tungus lived in the region. In 1637 a Cossack party, under the command of Busa, collected tribute in furs from the Yakut of the Yana River.

In 1638 the Cossack elder, Postnik Ivanov, with a party of twenty-seven men, left Yakutsk on horseback, crossed the Verkhoyansk Ridge and entered the valley of the upper course of the Yana River, meeting first Tungus, and later Yakut.

In 1641 a Cossack party, under the command of Stadukhin, journeyed to the northeast of Yakutsk and reached the tableland, Oimekon, on the upper course of the Indighirka River. There they met Reindeer Tungus and cattle-breeding Yakut and exacted fur tribute from them.

HS 162 y 167 In 1675 there were in Olekminsk 206 tribute-paying Yakut and Tungus; forty years previously there were no Yakut in Olekminsk. On the Viliui River were three camps of Tungus and Yakut, totaling 1005 men; in Shigansk were 332 Yakut and Tungus; in Verkhoyansk 125 Yakut tax payers.

HS 175 651 y 175 By 1620 a report had reached Tobolsk from the Mangaseya Cossacks of the Great (Lena) River and the Lena Yakut. In 1631 they descended by the Viliui River, a tributary of the Lena, to the Lena River and imposed tribute on the adjacent Yakut. In 1632 a party of Cossacks under the command of the Boyar's son, Shakhov, took tribute in sables from a clan of Viliui horse-breeding Yakut. The Viliui River farther up from its mouth was occupied by Tungus only. The northern boundary of the distribution of the Yakut at that time was the mouth of the Viliui. The whole Lena Valley from the mouth of the Viliui River to the south, at a distance of about 500 kilometers (or 310 miles) was occupied by Yakut. In their possession were also all the Lena islands of that region, rich in

y 191 133 361

2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902)1933 RV2 Yakut RV2
HISTORICAL SIBERIA RR2

pasture lands. There is no definite information as to how far inland they penetrated at that period. We may admit, however, that the Yakut, being horse and cattle breeders, were hardly inclined to move into the dense forests far from the majority of their tribesmen, i.e., far from the Lena Valley. In the beginning of the seventeenth century the Yakut abode on the western banks of the Lena must have been the territory of the two present *uluses*[1] of Yakutsk District, Namskij and Western Kangalassky. There, according to Yakut traditions, was the first place of refuge of their mythical forefather, the "Tatar" Elliei. From there a part of his nearest descendants could also have emigrated over the Lena islands to the eastern banks of the Lena River, where excellent pastures are as abundant as on the western banks.

At the time of the Russian invasions the Yakut were already the owners of the central part of the trans-Lena tableland. They had settlements on the tributaries of the Aldan River, the largest of the western tributaries of the Lena, and on the Amga River, a tributary of the Aldan. But the most populous locality appears to have been the western part of the Lena Valley between Tabaginsky Cape and the Kangalassky promontory. This valley is about 70 versts (46.2 miles) long and the bank ridge retreats from the river at a distance of from three to six versts (from two to four miles). Lake Saisary lies almost in the middle of this valley. This is the largest open plain encountered in Yakut territory with the densest population of horse and cattle breeders. The owners of this valley, the Kangalassky, constitute, according to all Yakut traditions, the most powerful group of clans. The Kangalas Toyon (prince, elder), Tygyn, is depicted in legends as their absolute ruler, although these clans were nominally considered as independent divisions.

In 1632 the Russian invaders erected a little fortress called Lesnoi Ostroshek, on the eastern bank of the Lena; ten years later they transferred it seventy kilometers to the south, where it became the center of the territory under the name of the City of Yakutsk. The fortress, now the City, of Olekminsk was erected by a Cossack party under the command of Buza in 1635. In the summer of 1637 Buza built two flat-bottomed ships, called *kocha*, and descended to the mouth of the Lena River, and traveled in an easterly direction on the Polar Sea. Not far from the mouth of the Omoloi River he was barred by ice and was compelled to abandon his ships. For three weeks his party walked over mountain ridges until they arrived at the upper reaches of the Yana River, where they met Yakut and took many sable skins from them as tribute.

[1] For the meaning of the administrative divisions of ulus, nasleg, and clan see p. 47.

6: Sauer--46 G-5 (1785-94) 1802 Yakut
116, 361, 461, 262

"This neighbourhood [RCH: along the Amicon River] contains, within the circumference of 30 versts, about 20 inhabited Yakut huts. The face of the country is moderately level for about 90 versts, interspersed with meadows and groves of larch, poplar, asp, birch, and alder, with underwoods of black and red currants, dog-rose, and raspberry. The situation is well calculated for the Yakuti; for, placed beyond the reach of intruding visitors, they pass their time in savage indolence, and, like the bears, their neighbours, are only roused from their lethargy by the absolute calls of nature, when they prowl about in quest of animals. The verges of the mountains that bound the plain are infested with bears, lynxes, wolves, foxes, elks, deer, hares, squirrels, and some sables. The meadows support their immense numbers of cattle and horses, and the rivers and lakes abound in fish and wild fowl; so that a trifling effort is sufficient to supply every want that they are sensible of."

10: Bush--299[3] T-3 (1865-67) 1871 Yakut
116, 361

"The town of Yakoutsk, 1000 versts distant, was built by them some three hundred years ago, and contains about 6000 inhabitants, mostly of their tribe."

11: Lansdell--296 M-3 (1879) 1882 Yakut
116, 346, 361, 492

"The town of Yakutsk, which the natives proudly call 'the city of the Yakutes,' presents a curious medley of dwellings; for there are seen not only the Government buildings, and the wooden houses of the Russians, but also the less pretentious winter dwellings of the Yakutes, and even their summer yourts. Oxen here take the place of horses. Women and girls ride them astride; their sledges also are often drawn by them, the driver being mounted on one of the animals. The cathedral is built of stone, and dedicated to St. Nicolas; and there are in the town some half-dozen churches, in which certain parts of the service, if not the whole, are performed in the Yakute language. The chief ecclesiastic is Dionysius, Bishop of Yakutsk and Viluisk, who has in his hyperborean diocese 49 churches and chapels, and one monastery containing 13 monks."

16: Great Britain Admiralty --166 [3] G-3 (no date)1920 Yakut
116, 231, 361, 576, 825

" They have only lately begun to breed dogs. They regard the dog as an unclean animal, and as having no kut (soul); they are harsh to their dogs; it is a gross offence against good manners to introduce a dog into a Yakut's house 'because of the evil spirits that sit on its tail'. Their habit of horse-breeding led to them setting the yurtas at a considerable distance from one another, because it was necessary to have plenty of pasturage for their big herds; if they had exhausted the pasturage near home, it would have been necessary to send the horses a long way, which would have meant risk from the negligence or dishonesty of the keepers."

17: Erman--258 [2] N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 361, 437

"Mitleyev [RCH: one of the author's companions on his journey] left with the Yakuts in Murierinsk, a packet, which was to be forwarded, from hand to hand, to the settlement of Olensk, which lies northwards in lat. 63.8. This is, as they term it, a place of the Yakuts, where several Russian merchants, with a priest of the Greek Church, reside for the sake of trade. In the older Russian maps, in truth, is found at this place, on the river Olenek, the following indication--'Projected city of Olensk; and close to it are marked the dwellings of the Yakutian princes, Khariton Shishkin and Muishkapan Okin, along with the yurts of their people. When modern maps, on the other hand, represent the banks of the river as almost wholly depopulated, I cannot help thinking that this confession is somewhat premature, for even now the Yakuts of Murierinsk look upon their prosperity and thriving condition as the consequences of the trade with those of the same race who live farther north."

17: Erman--266-267 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 342, 361, 492

"The tract of country which follows [RCH: from Neleusk to Olekma] is well peopled with Yakuts, whose winter dwellings always stand alone, in wide grassy lawns, in the midst of the prevailing pine woods. Here, too, the rectangular wooden huts are flat-roofed and plastered with cow dung, and the doors, for want of planking, are covered over with hairy ox hides. Flakes of ice fill the windows, yet in some of the yurts, bladder is used instead of these. The Yakutian sledges, which we met with continually were, like those of the Buraets, drawn by oxen, on one of which the driver rode. At the same time horses have been used here for riding fromearly [267] ages, as is proved indeed by the peculiarities of the Yakutian horse furniture. Their saddles have unusually thick stuffing, on which the rider sits, squeezed in between two high and perpendicular boards. The white colour of the horses decidedly gains ground here, along with the Yakutian population."

24: Wrangell--39-40 G-3 (1820-23) 1842 Yakut
116, 181, 361, 691

"As a nation they are unsocial, litigious, and vindictive. An injury received by one of them is very rarely forgotten, and, if he cannot revenge it himself, he will leave the feud to his son. Their passion for litigation is excessive: they will frequently undertake difficult and expensive journeys, in a cause where perhaps the matter in dispute is not of the value of a rouble. Their unsocial dispo-[40]sition, which leads them to prefer settling by single families at a distance from each other, is strikingly contrasted with the cheerful and ready hospitality which they show to strangers. They very seldom settle in communities, and it is only along the route from Jakuzk to the Aldan, where the country is more populous, that such settlements are now and then to be met with; but beyond the Werchojansk chain, the solitary jurti are often hundreds of wersts apart, so that the nearest neighbours may not see each other for years. Such distances are far greater than can be required on account of pasture, and are rather to be ascribed to the disposition which leads them to seek solitude, and to avoid all social intercourse."

24: Wrangell--164 G-3 (1820-23) 1842 Yakut
116, 133, 361

"The vegetation is especially luxuriant in the albuty, or dried-up lakes, which are numerous in this district, and form one of the peculiar features of Northern Siberia. These flat valleys are occasionally filled with water by the overflowing of the rivers in spring, when they are converted into lakes of various sizes, all abounding in fish. The intense frosts of winter cause large clefts in the ground, by which the water drains off, sometimes in the course of a single year, sometimes in several. The rich alluvial soil thus exposed soon becomes covered with a luxuriant growth of the finest grass, and the Jakuti never fail to settle near these fresh pastures, so that most of the settlements in this district are called albuty. (1)

1. A curious phenomenon occurs in the lakes in the vicinity of the village of Alaseja. In the middle of the winter the water sometimes suddenly disappears, without any side channels being visible. In such cases a loud noise is heard at the time, and when the bottom of the lake is laid bare, large fissures are visible, occasioned by the severity of the frost."

44: Gilder -- 175 J-2 (1882) 1883 Yakut
116, 161, 177, 342, 361 Russia
636.36

"Sradnia, or Middle Kolymsk, is a Russian settlement of about 500 inhabitants, including Russians Yakouts, and a few Tchouktchis. The houses are all built of hewn logs, are but one story high, and the windows are glazed with blocks of transparent ice. Some of the houses have windows of glass, but these are always much broken and mended, so that seen from the outside they look like the stained-glass windows of a church, The most conspicuous building there, as in all the little Russian towns, is the church edifice, which is of Oriental architecture, with a dome surmounted by a cross and exceedingly florid in its style of architecture. Adjoining the church, and within the same enclosure, is a small wooden tower surrounded by a block-house, which was built by the first settlers of Sradnia as a means of defence against the savage Yakouts and Tchouktchis. This town is irregularly built and extends over a considerable area of ground, the Government buildings being situated about a mile from the centre. By Government buildings is meant merely the storehouses for grain and bread and for the skins which are received for taxes. These buildings are of logs, with great heavy doors and padlocks about the size of an ordinary valise, while the key is a load of itself."

45: Lesseps--200 T-2 (1788) 1790 Yakut
116, 161, 177, 361 Russia
636.36

"I travelled the whole night, and arrived in the morning at the fort of Taousk, being a distance of forty-two wersts. [RCH: from the village of Armani] This ostrog, where, on conformity to the plan we had laid down, we spent the day, is situated on the river Taon. It contains twenty isbas, [RCH: Russian-type dwellings made of wood] a small church served by the vicar of Okotsk, and a building for the reception of tributes, surrounded by palisades in the form of bastions. Twenty Yakouts, two chiefs, and some other Koriacs, who, attracted by the situation, have settled there, make up the whole of the inhabitants. The garrison consists of fifteen soldiers, commanded by a serjeant named Okhotin, at whose house I took up my abode till the evening.

In the night I passed through the village of Gorbé, peopled by Yakouts, and a small number of Koriacs."

45: Lesseps--202 T-2 (1788) 1790 Yakut
116, 231, 361, 563

"In about five hours we came again to the sea, which we left at a short distance from the village of Iné, where we arrived in the dusk of the evening.

This ostrog is thirty wersts from the [RCH: Iné] mountain, and is peopled by Russians and Yakouts, whose habitations are isbas [RCH: Russian-type dwellings made of wood] and yourts. They have the care of a stud of two hundred horses, which we had an opportunity of seeing, ten wersts from the village."

45: Lesseps--261-262 T-2 (1788) 1790 Yakut
116, 231, 361

"We proceeded the next day, at nine o'clock in the morning, and forded the river Okhota, the course of which we were no longer to pursue. I perceived here and there some Yakout yourts at a considerable distance from each other: seldom are any number of them seen together.

The disposition of these families to live in this isolated manner, results from a motive of interest that is of the first import-[262]ance. Horses being their chief source of wealth, if the proprieters (some of whom possess more than a thousand) built their habitations nearer to each other, how would they be able to procure nourishment for their numerous studs? The neighbouring pastures must soon be exhausted, and it would be necessary to send multitudes of them to a considerable distance; but how many inconveniences would result in consequence of the negligence or dishonesty of the keepers."

Y /2 cont./

121 who, in the year 1875, again visited the lower part of the Olenék
[114] and the Lena to complete his observations, while at the same time I took part in the surveying of Siberia, likewise started by the Geographical Society.

Y
[126] Since East Siberia, and especially the part under consideration here, is apt to be a complete terra incognita to the foreign reader to an even greater extent than to the Russian, I shall /3/ also add here for better orientation a brief survey of the history, rather uneventful in itself, of this northernmost region of Russia, with reference to the general map of the territory between the Jenisseí and Jana /Yana/ appended to this volume, which, drawn up according to our data, was reproduced by the Imperial Russian General Staff.

Y
175 The stretches of land of interest to us were discovered by Rus-
648 sian Cossacks in the first half ot the seventeenth century. The
167 city of Mangaséja /Mangazeya/ was founded on the river Tas /Taz/ in Samojeden /Samoyed/ country about the year 1600
● [361] under the rule of Czar Boris Fedorovich Godunov. From here the Cossacks soon penetrated to the Jenisseí, founded there in the year 1607 near the mouth of the Turuchán /Turukhan/ River a settlement named after it, to which the entire trade of Mangaséja was later directed, and soon afterwards also discovered the mouths of the Jenisseí and the Pjássida River lying to the east. Spurred on by ambition and also not forgetting their pockets, Cossacks in the following years gradually pushed up the (Lower) Tungúska, emptying into the Jenisseí near Turuchánsk, before them, as Fischer (1) relates, the hunters ("are rovers who band together in

Y
[113]

1. Johann Eberhard Fischer, Sibirische Geschichte /Siberian History/, St. Petersburg, 1768. 2 vols. The following very characteristic quotations are taken from this work.

order to catch game"). The Lena was reached probably as early as 1620 (even earlier by the hunters) by crossing the watershed, barely 30 versts wide here, from the present village of Podwolótschnaja /Podvoloshnaya/ on the Tunguska and therefore emerging about 50 versts below the present Kirensk.

T
648 This was not accomplished without battle with the resident
721 tribes. Fischer tells about a band /4/ of 189 hunters: "Never-
175 theless they were occasionally sharply rapped on the knuckles

/186 cont./

122 Besides these stunted /187/ trunks, however, roots of great forest
(137) trees were found here and there in the ground far beyond the present timber line. A few such roots were pointed out to us; they show that the timber line is receding.

On the Pur this time we were assigned a very fine balagan in Kuladý for a dwelling, in which we rested for a day from the exhausting trip across the tundra. On this occasion I must say
621 something about the inhabited places here. Boljkalák, like a
• 361 number of settlements on the Lena which we succeeded in seeing later, can properly be designated as a village. If it does not wholly correspond to our conceptions of such, nevertheless at least a few huts stand together, more than one family lives there, and the inhabitants themselves appear to be more prosperous. On the other hand, all the other places that we encountered on our journey are to be compared with, say, the Latvian workers in Livonia (scattered farmsteads) -- the Russian designation here for this is urótschischtsche. On quite a large area, which is customarily named after a little river, a few balagans lie scattered in the forest, often versts apart, and here, too, in Kuladý. Even the balagan about five versts away in which we had previously stayed not far from the Pur was, it seems, counted as belonging to Kuladý. /The last paragraph of p. 187, p. 188, and the first paragraph of p. 189 are omitted in the translation; see the foreign text. Page 189 continues as follows./

122 On the evening of November 1, we finally arrived safe and
123 sound in the village of Ssiktjách /Siktyakh/ on the Lena, where we found the friendliest reception in the house of Rjeschétnikow. Having been informed of our imminent arrival by the Cossack long before, Mrs. Rjeschétnikow had put in order for us her only two rooms. The building consisted essentially of a Jakut /Yakut/ yurt, but was much larger than those offered to us before, on which two small rooms had been built; in one of the latter there was a Russian stove, which opened up the agreeable prospect of
241 freshly baked bread. We were entertained not only with that, and
122 with fine cakes, fish, and the like; Mrs. Rjeschétnikow daily
123 showed us hospitality with splendid potatoes which she had grown

/210 cont./

132 a minimum temperature of -37.0° R., at which the mercury in a little bottle that stood beside the thermometer was solidly frozen; since November 5, when /211/ in the vicinity of Ssiktjách the minimum was -38° R., it had become milder, and in the night from November 11 to 12 in Dshejelák-Dshaná in the vicinity of the timber line I had even noted a minimum of only -18.7° R., and at 7:00 on the morning of the twelfth, only -14.5° R., but then it became colder again. When toward midnight I stepped outside the door of the yurt, I also had the opportunity to see a shining meteor moving in a long, fiery path through the stars shining most brilliantly in the intense cold.

122 The next day, November 17, brought us at last to another principal point of our journey, the district town of Werchojansk /Verkhoyansk/, which we reached at an early hour. It lies in the valley of the Jana /Yana/, into which we quickly descended down a fairly steep slope of about 900-1,000 feet from the nearest heights and then drove a while on the river itself.

/212/ Tenth Chapter

Werchojansk /Verkhoyansk/. -- N. S. Goróchow. -- The world's cold pole. -- The isprawnik /ispravnik/. -- Increase in the post tax. -- Antediluvian animal carcasses. -- Garden cultivation. -- Difficulties of the journey. -- Skoptsy. -- Northern lights. -- Arctic boundaries of some forest trees. -- Adventure on the Jana /Yana/. -- M. P. Bereshnow and his caravan. -- Silver ore -- Crossing the Werchojansk /Verkhoyansk/ Range. -- Cold quarters for the night.

122 We had not had too high an idea of Werchojansk /Verkhoyansk/,
● 361 for we had already been very surprised in Turuchansk /Turukhansk/ to find not a single true street such as even the smallest villages located somewhat more to the south exhibit, but rather only individual houses, with quagmires and puddles in between; nevertheless Werchojansk now fell behind even our already very modest expectations. To be sure, it looked cleaner than Turuchansk, for everything was covered with deep snow, but the place was even

/212 cont./

122 smaller than we had thought -- the church with the house of the
361 clergyman, the building for the isprawnik /ispravnik/, then the pride of Werchojansk -- the two-story house of the merchant Nikíta Ssemjónowitsch Goróchow -- two or three other houses and several yurts, very scattered, and that was all.

122 Nevertheless we were heartily glad that we were here and
123 were most pleasantly surprised by the friendly reception in the house of Mr. Goróchow. The present master of the house was still a young man /213/ barely 30 years old and, as was soon shown, relatively highly cultivated; he had Petersburg newspapers, played the violin, and busied himself with photography. We obtained from him quite a good photographic view of Werchojansk. He obviously belonged, so to speak, among the patricians of this town, if he is not the only one of this type, for the few other men who were visible more in the background during our reception were not introduced and seemed to be dii minorum gentium.

122 In those places in Russia, and particularly in Siberia, where there are no guesthouses, therefore in practically all of them, with the exception of the largest towns along the important roads to Moscow, there are available for travelers who pass through on orders from the government temporary lodgings which, for the most part -- of course, only according to local conceptions -- are furnished quite respectably and usually belong to the more highly esteemed inhabitants. One pays nothing here in rent, but, on the other hand, does pay for service and, of course, for food and drink. Here in Werchojansk it was different, for the Goróchow family, for several generations, would not be deprived of entertaining distinguished travelers -- free of charge, of course -- by themselves. Thus a few years before us Baron Maydell and Dr. Neumann rested here on their journey to the Tschuktschen /Chukchee/ country and back from there; indeed, almost 50 years before us Baron Wrangell /Wrangel/ stayed with a forefather of our friendly host, who, however, in Wrangell's travel account (in the Russian edition) is erroneously called Dorochow.

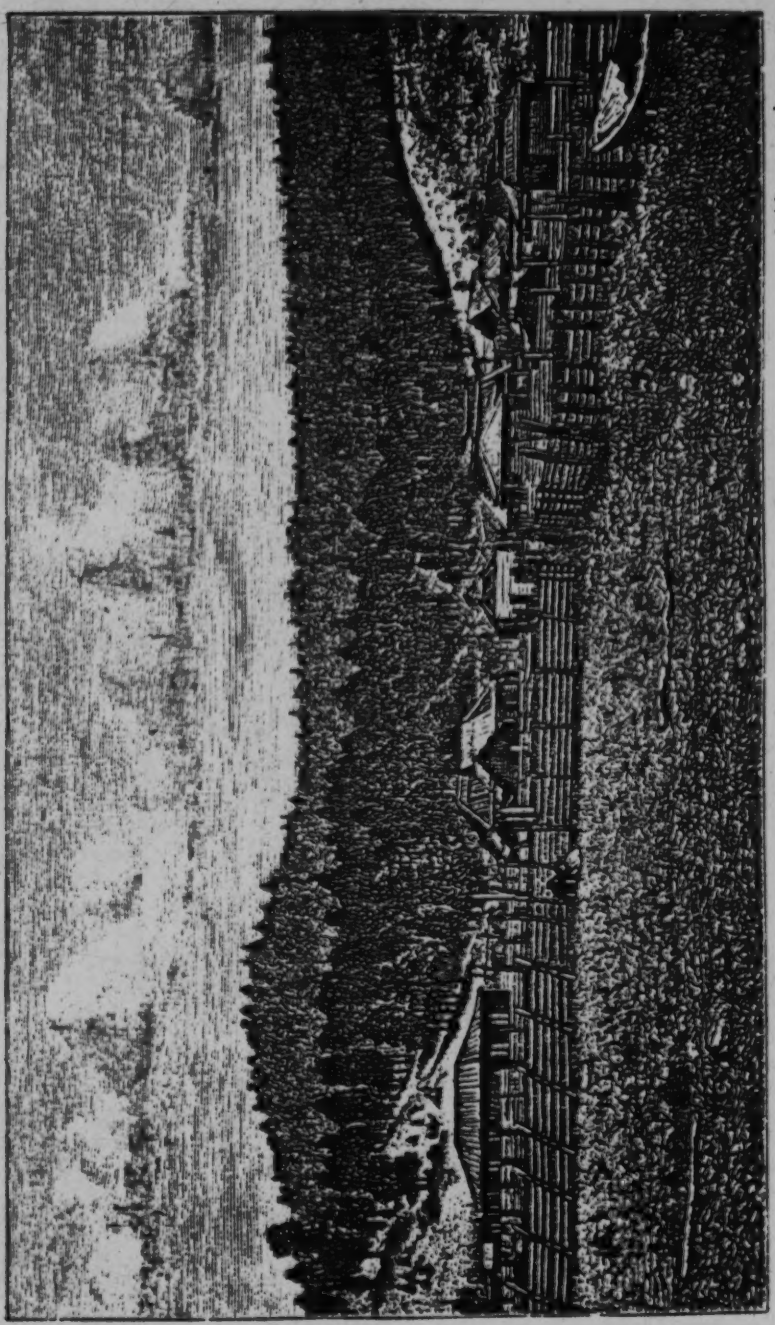
/213 cont./

122 Werchojansk, although, as I have just said, scarcely de-
●361 serving the name of village, much less that of town, has never-
132 theless become well known in the most distant lands, at least to scholars, for, as has been /214/ proved, it is the coldest point on the whole surface of the earth. /The remainder of p. 214, p. 215, and the first two paragraphs of p. 216 are omitted in the translation; see the foreign text. Page 216 continues as follows./

122 In Werchojansk our first interest was the isprawnik, who was to provide for our further journey, but, above all, had to give us an explanation as to why up to this point he had simply done nothing for the expedition. Only the great kindness of the Jakuten /Yakut/ had made it /217/ possible for us to reach Werchojansk; otherwise we would have been in the sad plight of having to winter somewhere in the far north, with our supplies almost entirely exhausted and only very little money, for we could not have counted on help directly from Jakutsk /Yakutsk/ before the next spring. I prefer to omit the name of this noble individual here, for unfortunately I cannot report anything good about him. The governor's orders, to do everything possible in the interests of our expedition, but especially to make arrangements for our unimpeded return journey as soon as we appeared at any point along the Lena -- he had had these orders as early as May, but had simply disregarded them, because, as he very naïvely explained, he did not know what he should do. Even the very obvious thought of notifying the Jakut officials along our route had not occurred to him.

I soon found an explanation for this quite incredible indolence: namely, the good man is supposed to be very addicted to the vice of drink in the well-known Siberian form -- which, incidentally, also occurs here and there in Europe -- sapoí. Those addicted to it drink only periodically, but then in such a way that they are incapable of anything for some time -- the duration of the attack varies from a few days to months and similarly the sober periods are very different, according to the severity of the malady. A characteristic of this sickness, for that is indeed the most accurate designation for it, is the frightful

51: Müller--152 N-2 (1873-1875) 1882 RV2 Yakut RV2



133
137
361 ●
342
351
501

Shérbinsk / Zherbinsk/ Station on the Lena.

(up to the beginning of the 20th century), is a humped iron scythe with a short, curved handle with which the grass was rather hewn (left and right) than mown. Later on this scythe was replaced by the Russian Lithuanian-type scythe and is never used nowadays. The Yakuts mowed the grass in the alasy and river valleys, gathering the hay into small sheaves, in which it often became soaked and rotted away, hence the quality of the hay was not usually very high.

In the winter, the cattle were kept in cold, dark and crowded khotons, which were usually built under the same roof as the dwelling; the animals were usually herded into the khoton only at night, while in the daytime they were left outside, in the frost. When there was a lack of hay, the cattle had little to eat, and were watered with icy water from a hole in the ice. The austere conditions under which the cattle were kept and the cold climate made them hardy, but unproductive. The Yakut cow yielded an average of 60 buckets of milk a year, and for two or three months in the winter was left unmilked. The mares were only milked in the summer, as a general rule.

Both the cattle and the horses were utilized in much the same way; they gave milk, meat, and hides, and served for transportation (oxen were usually harnessed to carts, while horses were ridden, or carried packs).

The predominance of pastoralism involved preservation of the semi-nomadic way of life. Until recently the Yakuts retained the custom of moving twice a year—round about May and October—from the winter to the summer camps, and back again. The winter dwellings were usually set up near the mowings, while the summer dwellings (which, incidentally, were comparatively close by the former) were built close to the pasture-lands.

Fishing, Hunting and Agriculture

The second branch of economy in importance was fishing. There was a tremendous amount of carp and a small fish called mundu in the abundant lakes, and coregonus muksun, white salmon and so on were plentiful in the rivers. For the poor people who had no cattle, fishing had long been a main occupation; the expression balyksyt (fisherman) is used in documents of the 17th century in the sense of "a poor man." At the same time, there were actually complete tribal groups who seem to have lived chiefly by fishing. These were the so-called "foot clans" of the Yakuts (Osekui, Ontuls, Kokui, Kiriks, Kyrgydays and Orgots). These tribes, who were clearly a remnant of the very ancient prepastoral population, were first discovered in the 17th century by Russians on the Vilyuy. For the Yakut pastoralists, fishing was an essential subsidiary occupation and has retained its importance until our own day.

The fish were caught chiefly in the summer, but there was also fishing through the ice during the wintertime. Use was made of seines which were chiefly made of horsehair, smaller nets, and sack-nets, etc. In the autumn there was usually collective fishing with a large seine, and the catch was divided among all those taking part, in accordance with ancient custom.

There is a hypothesis (V. L. Seroshevskiy) that Yakut fishing was only recently borrowed from the Evenks and Russians. In actual fact, fishing is the oldest form of economy among the population of the Lena region, including the ancestors of the Yakuts.

Hunting is the third, though far less important, branch of Yakut economy. Just like fishing, it goes back to very ancient times. During the

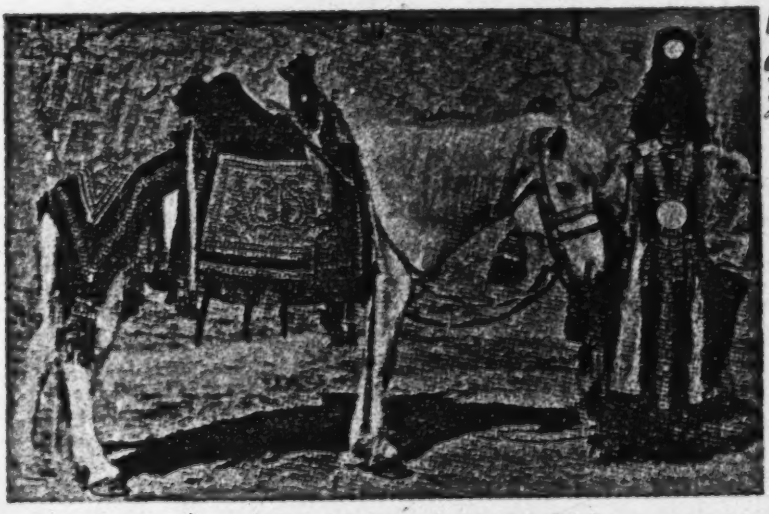
53:Tokarev and Gurvich E-4 (no date) 1964
RV2 Yakut RV2

Yakut sleigh.

Another means of overland transportation was the ski, which was lined underneath with horsehide and not reindeer suede. The Yakut boats were no different from the Tungus ones. They had a canoe (tyy) made of birch-bark or else flat-bottomed and made from planks. The larger vessel—the karbaz—had sails and was evidently borrowed from the Russians.

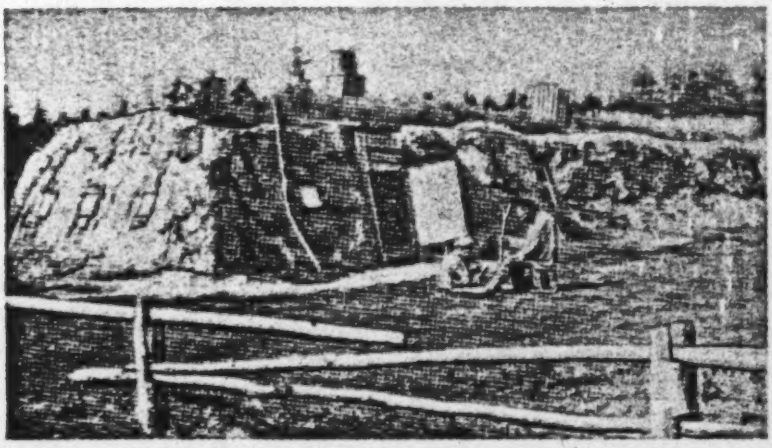
Settlements and Buildings

Until recently the Yakut settlements were very much scattered about. The prevalent type of populated point (yal) consisted of one, two or three yurts standing in a row; there were less than 20 people (according to the



Yakut woman with horse festively saddled.

53:Tokarev and Gurvich E-4 (no date) 1964
RV2 Yakut RV2



Dwelling of poor Yakut.

1926 census) in 70% of the populated points of Yakutiya. This was predominantly at the winter camps (kystyk). The summer camps (sayylyk) were usually larger—from 5 to 10 or more dwellings together. The scattered nature of the settlement was primarily due to the terrain and the type of economy and also to the desire to exploit separate alasy and river valleys scattered about the taiga.

The predominant type of Yakut dwelling (d'ie) was the yurt or balagan. It was a structure with a square base made of erect poles slanting slightly inwards, with a very gently sloping double roof, the overall effect of which was a truncated quadrilateral pyramid. The framework of the yurt consisted of four thick vertical columns at the corners, inserted in the ground, and a horizontal frame of four beams resting on top of them. In most of the yurts, apart from the four corner columns, there were two, four or eight additional ones (in the middle of the walls) supporting the beams. The four sides of the yurt usually faced the four points of the compass, with the entrance facing east. Parallel to the entrance, in the middle of the frame, running from south to north, there was a thick main beam, or two thinner ones alongside. The ends of the thinner beams rested on the main beam, while the other ends rested on the eastern and western beams of the framework and formed a solid, gently sloping double roof. The walls were made of thinner, upright beams or poles, the lower ends of which were inserted into the ground, while the others rested on the top frame close together. Small rectangular windows were made in the southern and western walls, in which were inserted panes; in the old days these panes were covered in the summer with mica or sometimes white cloth, bladder, or bits of glass (the latter were inserted in the birchbark frame); in the winter, pieces of ice were put in the windows. In the eastern wall they made an entrance with a one-piece, slightly inclined plank door covered with cowhide or some other such material. Bark was placed on top of the roof beams and then covered with earth; on the outside the walls were coated with clay mixed with cow dung, the coating being repeated quite often, sometimes every autumn. Around the walls on the outside was a low earth embankment sometimes fortified with a wooden fence (central Yakutiya). The floor was usually made of earth, but the richer

53:Tokarev and Gurvich E-4 (no date) 1964
RV2 Yakut RV2

175 firm Arai Gumi. The Yakut people took up arms in defense of their young
648 Republic. In March 1923, with the help of the Red Army units, General Pepelyayev was crushed.

175 Even while the struggle against the Pepelyayev bands was still at its
631 height, in December 1922 there was held the first All-Yakut Constituent Assembly of Soviets; this conference elected a Central Executive Committee and Council of People's Commissars of the YaASSR. In 1923 the Constitution of the YaASSR was adopted at the Third All-Yakut Congress of Soviets. In 1937 a new Yakutiyan Constitution was drafted and on March 9 of the same year it was adopted.

Industry and Transportation

433 During the Five-Year Plans a major socialist industry was developed in Yakutiya. At the present time, in addition to the gold, nonferrous metal and mica industries, there are coal, shipbuilding, building-materials, printing and also fish and dairy industries in Yakutiya.

316 Gold was first mined in the regions bordering on Yakutiya (Vitim and Olekma Basins) more than 100 years ago. But in Yakutiya itself the gold was only mined in very small quantities. In 1923 a prospecting party fitted out by the Yakutiyan government, with the help of Yakut guides, discovered the huge gold deposits on the river Aldan. The Aldan immediately became a major gold-mining area. All around the Aldan there arose settlements, mines, and power stations. At the present time the Aldan mines use powerful electrodredges, conveyors, compressors, excavators and haulage machinery.

[317] The salt reserves of Kempendey along the tributary of the Vilyuy are being exploited on a wide scale.

Extensive prospecting has resulted in the discovery of dozens of new coal deposits. There is now a coal industry in Yakutiya. An example of the rapid development of the coal industry in Yakutiya is the Sangarskiy area. Gold was first mined in Sangary in 1928. During the first year of the mine's existence only 15 tons of coal were brought up, operations being conducted entirely by hand. Nowadays the mine is a large, well-equipped industrial enterprise. A mechanized system for loading the coal onto barges has been installed. The construction of houses and cul-
[361] tural facilities on a large scale has begun in the coal-mining regions. Sangary itself has become a miners' settlement and an industrial corner of Yakutiya.

313 Before the advent of the Soviet regime the very rich forest reserves of Yakutiya were hardly touched. The timber rotted where it stood, or else was destroyed by forest fire. At the present time forestry is a leading branch of the Yakut economy. Advanced Soviet machinery is used on a wide scale at the lumber camps. There are mobile power stations, and electric saws with power units. The forestry organizations have been provided with dozens of hauling tractors and trucks. Fully mechanized sectors have been set up. The timer is floated downriver by means of mechanical traction. Sawmills have been built.

47 Hundreds of industrial plants have been set up in Yakutiya during the
178 Soviet period. The manufacture of glass, bricks, building materials, refractory materials, furniture, leatherwares and footwear, provides for local needs.

433 In accordance with the planned development of the economy the Yakut
184 region has been divided up into specialized regions—coal mining in the

reindeer-breeding collective farms there are now dairy and horse-breeding sections.

The Stalin Even-Yakut collective farm in the Nizhne-Kolymskiy Rayon (formerly known as the Sutanya-Udŏran) is successfully developing reindeer-breeding alongside horse-breeding, fishing and hunting. The collective contains more than 17,000 reindeer. In 1955 more than 850 tsentners of such important species of fish as whitefish and baranatka were caught. In 1955, 215,000 rubles worth of furs were delivered to the State. The gross monetary income of this collective farm was 2,430,000 rubles; 1,423,000 rubles were distributed to the collective-farm members for labor units, and for each labor unit the payment was 17 rubles cash, 1.04 kg of meat and 720 g of fish. The monetary income per household averaged 24,000 rubles.

Despite the fact that the chief branches of industry of the northern farms have required periodic migration on the part of the population, all the farms have constructed settlements or collective-farm centers. As an example we can take the settlement of Kolymskaya, the center of the Turvaurgin collective farm. This center contains the headquarters of the farm administration, an incomplete secondary school with boarding facilities, a hospital, a shop, a house of culture with a library, a trading station, a power station, bathhouses, a dairy farm, and 50 standard farmhouses. The farm recently acquired an S30 tractor, a launch and two motorboats. In ethnic composition the Turvaurgin collective farm is multinational and consists of Chukchi, Yukagirs, Yakuts and Evenks.

New Way of Life

A considerable obstacle in the way of the implementation of cultural and public-health program in Yakutiya between 1920 and 1930 was the scattered nature of Yakut settlements due to the ancient occupation of pastoralism. One, two or three yurts together was the predominant type of "settlement." The combining of them into larger units was further required by the everyday farming needs of collective farms.

The construction of settlements under Yakutiyan conditions was a major achievement in socialist reconstruction of the Yakutiyan countryside. It provided an opportunity for installing radio and telephone on the farms and providing them with medical and cultural-educational institutions. In 1950 the construction of settlements in southern Yakutiya was by and large complete. The farm settlements are usually located on elevated riverbanks or by the shores of lakes and consist of several parallel streets. Generally speaking, timber houses rather than yurts are built in these settlements. The center is reserved for the school, collective-farm administrative offices, medical center and club. On many farms yurts are used as work premises. There are quite a few settlements with power stations. In the Megino-Kangalasskiy Rayon alone there are 14 farm power stations with a total output of more than 510 kilowatts. Radio-relay systems have been installed in many of the new settlements. The farmers live in the settlements when they are not out working.

Although several types of farmhouses have been developed, they are still far from perfect. The rigorous climate makes particular demands upon the housing construction in Yakutiya. Special forms of heating are used in the new houses, such as triple frames—the first frame is a single one, while the second is inserted during the winter and has two panes of

and Muna on the Lena; the Edzhen group lived on the lower reaches and the Dongot group on the upper reaches of the Olenek. The ancestors of the Karyntuo probably also lived on the Olenek.

Clans with the name Dolgan and Edyan (Edzhen) were commonly found among the Evens and Evenks. For example, Dolgan clans are known in the regions of the Anadyr' and Gizhiga, on the Kamchatka and Okhotsk coast; Edzhen clans are known in the Aldan Basin, around the Ayan on the Okhotsk coast, and so on.

During the 18th century the ancestors of the present-day Dolgans migrated to the northwest, the Dolgan groups moving to the rivers Popigay and Khatanga, the Dongot and Edzhens to the Noril'sk Lakes region, and the Karyntuo to the Boganida River basin. Those left on the Lena became part of the local Yakut naslegs as separate clans.

The first Yakut settlers appeared at the end of the 17th century in the Khatanga Basin on the river Kheta, and from then on the influx continued to increase. In the 18th century these Yakuts formed into the Lower Tundra Yakut Volost.

Even before the Yakuts—at the beginning of the first half of the 17th century—the rivers Pyasina, Dudypta, Boganida, Kheta, and Khatanga were settled by Russian hunters and trappers who founded the ancient Russian population of these places, subsequently known as tundra peasants. They were chiefly concerned with fishing, and to a lesser extent with hunting. It was from them in particular that the Dolgans and Nganasans learned to set pitfall traps for the polar fox. The influence of their Russian neighbors has long been evident in the dwellings and everyday life of the Dolgans, that is to say, during the migration to the Taymyr.

During the 18th and 19th centuries the gap between the culture and everyday life of the different groups of the population in this territory began to narrow. The Yakut language became predominant and was absorbed not only by originally Tungus groups, but also by a large number of tundra peasants. Intermarriage swept away the former barriers between the Evenks, Yakuts and Russians to an ever greater extent.

The system of tsarist administration was no different here from what existed in any other part of Northern Siberia. The Dolgans, Yakuts and Evenks had to pay the fur-tax as "natives" and formed "clans" headed by princelings, while the tundra peasants were forced to pay a poll tax, were formed into a "community" and headed by an elder. People living many hundreds of kilometers away from the nearest centers were economically dependent on the merchants who monopolized supplies to the region, bought up all the furs, and cruelly exploited the population.

Economy and Everyday Life

The main occupations of the Dolgans of the past were reindeer-breeding, hunting, and, in certain regions, fishing. Until quite recently the Dolgans were still leading a nomadic life. Their nomadizing was basically of two types. In the region of the Noril'sk Lakes and in the basin of the Popigay, they retained a more archaic system of nomadizing and did not leave, generally speaking, the forest-tundra belt, but kept to the forest-covered river valleys in the winter, and wandered back to the bare steppes for the summer. The winter camps of other groups of Dolgans stretched along the forest-tundra belt from Lake Pyasino to the lower reaches of the Popigay. These were typical "edge-of-the-forest" dwellers. The winter was spent in the forest-tundra with slight deviations south of the northern boundary of the forest vegetation, while the summer was passed in the tundra,

55:Popov E-5 (no date) 1964 RV2 Yakut RV2
• Dolgan

somewhat to the north of this boundary. The migration from winter to summer camps and back was made in the spring or fall.

In winter, the families of Noril'sk and Popigay Dolgans lived apart from one another, often singly. The remainder still continued to nomadize along the northern edge of the forest and formed the chain of "stations" of the winter Noril'sk-Popigay highway; this consisted of groups of 5-10 households, some of the stations comprising groups of permanent dwellings. But since reindeer require frequent change of pasture, the camps of separate families and the entire stations, and the reindeer-herders living in the Russian-type houses as well, had to change their place of residence several times during the course of the winter.

As spring approached and the camps broke up, the Dolgans formed into nomadic groups. These groups were combined on a territorial basis and were bound by common economic interests. Associations of this kind meant that a smaller number of herdsmen was required for the reindeer since it took fewer people to look after a large herd than several small ones. In the spring, as soon as the grass appeared, and in the summer, during the season of the mosquitoes and other harmful insects, the Dolgans watched their herds the whole day through, appointing sentries from each household in turn. The nomadic Dolgans wandered along lakes, rivers and mountains. In the autumn, when the insects disappeared, each group of nomads divided up once more into separate families, which then nomadized in the region of their polar-fox traps, setting them again for the winter, or else hunted singly for wild reindeer until it was time to go back to the camps.

The reindeer-breeding of the Dolgans combined the traditions of the Tungus breeding for purposes of riding, with devices and techniques borrowed from the herders of the Samoyedic groups. Thus, the Dolgans used reindeer both for riding and carrying (in summer) and at the same time made extensive use of reindeer sled-teams (in winter). But even in the first half of the 19th century the Dolgans in some parts only used their reindeer for riding. The various types of sleds are fundamentally similar to the Nennish and Nganasan types, but they also have the Yakut type with its low, straight staves. The harnessing technique differed from that of the Nentsy; the lead reindeer is harnessed and controlled by the rein on the right, whereas among the Nentsy, Entsy and Nganasans the lead reindeer is harnessed and controlled by the left-hand rein (it should be noted in this connection that the Evenks and Dolgans, even when riding reindeer, mount from the right and also guide it from the right). The system of milking reindeer, typical of the Evenks, was retained by the Dolgans; like the Nentsy and Nganasans they also used herd dogs. The saddles and riding techniques of the Dolgans were of the Tungus type.

The Dolgans hunted polar fox, wild reindeer and various wildfowl including duck, geese and partridge. Until quite recently they still used bows and arrows for the purpose, obtaining them from the Kets, via the Russians, and also from the Yakuts and southern Evenks. The Dolgans also had self-triggered bows for killing reindeer, which they set up in the forest preserves east of the Khatanga. According to legend, in the remote past the Dolgans used to hunt reindeer with slings and throwing-arrows.

The Dolgans attributed great importance to collective reindeer spearing in the autumn at river crossings, and to various hunting techniques with guns (which replaced the old bow and arrow). In the winter, the animals were hunted by means of specially trained decoy reindeer. In the winter they hunted reindeer with guns and bows and arrows almost entirely by the chasing technique: 4 strong reindeer were harnessed to a light sled and the herd was trailed for hours on end. Another form of winter hunting

55:Popov E-5 (no date) 1964 RV2 Yakut RV2
Dolgan

The personal property of the collective-farm members includes herds of reindeer (up to 100 head), transport equipment, vertical nets, hunting guns and hunting and fishing tackle. Reindeer-herding remains the chief branch of the economy, but is now done in accordance with good animal husbandry practice. A reindeer technician and a veterinary assistant are attached to each team, which looks after a subherd.]

The Dolgan reindeer-herders on the collective farms pasture the herds in good grazing ground, far from the herding tent by day, and as night falls drive them back to the tent. Having rested, the reindeer at midnight begin to feed near the tent; at dawn they are driven to new feeding grounds some distance away. This grazing system, on the one hand, keeps the reindeer well fed and, on the other hand, they do not stray during the night and are easy to watch. Twenty-four-hour-a-day, year-round guarding of the reindeer has become a rule in collective herding.

[The herd of reindeer is constantly growing. Thus, in the Avamskiy Rayon, the number of reindeer increased over the last five-year period, by more than 50%. The necessity of yearly migrations along the tundra from Dudinka to the Anabar has been eliminated; previously this had a most unfavorable effect on Dolgan reindeer-herding. The demand for pack-reindeer has been reduced, due to the carriage of goods into the Avamskiy and Khatangskiy Rayons by the Northern Sea Route; from here they are brought to remote inland points by steamboat or cutter. Previously, the only route connecting the Dudinka with the Avamskiy and Khatangskiy Rayons in the winter was the reindeer highway from Dudinka to Popigay. Connections are now maintained winter and summer by airplane, although reindeer transport is still of some importance. Its technology is unchanged.

[Hunting technology has been reconstructed. Traps are set in the autumn before the beginning of the blizzards. For this purpose, hunting brigades sometimes journey to the north for several hundred kilometers into the taiga, spending the nights in sled-tents with iron stoves. Hunting brigades are made up before the beginning of the season, traps being distributed on the basis of 150–200 pitfall traps and 10 springtraps per hunter. With the first snow the brigades go out into the tundra and begin to hunt wild reindeer. Foxtraps are baited with the surplus meat obtained. In the Khatangskiy Rayon alone, where the majority of the hunters are Dolgans, the collective farms during the 1948–49 season set 5000 new pitfall traps and prepared 1000 bait-pits for foxes, in which they placed more than 40 tons of bait.

[Fox-hunting begins on November 15th. Springtraps are placed by experienced hunters at places where wild reindeer have been killed in the autumn, or on the bloody tracks of wounded wild reindeer near bait-pits, or previously discovered burrows. Hunting is the main source of income for Dolgan collective farms. The previous predatory methods have gone out of use—spearings, stockades, geese nets. Fishing has become important in a number of areas. Vegetable-gardening and animal husbandry (other than reindeer) have developed on many Dolgan collective farms. The members grow chiefly radishes, cabbage and onions.

[A process of settling down the previously nomadic population is in progress. In the new settlements where the collective-farm members whose work does not make them nomadic live, dwelling-houses of the Russian type have been built, along with various other farm and public buildings. Many settlements have their own electric stations.]

The members of reindeer-herding and hunting brigades lead a nomadic life. Their families frequently travel with them. Separate nomadic groups are now set up, not on the basis of individual relations among different

55:Popov E-5 (no date) 1964 RV2 Yakut RV2
Dolgan

291
342
871
361

Kindergarten on a walk. Taymyr National Okrug, Khatangskiy Rayon.

families, but on the initiative of the collective-farm administration, and their routes are determined in the same way. Fishing brigades sent to fish in some river or lake lead a settled life there, partly in houses built by the collective farm at the fishing grounds. 221 226 474

[The Dolgans, particularly the descendants of the tundra peasants, had Russian cottages even before the Revolution. They now build sturdy houses, using both imported lumber and driftwood. The old-fashioned pole tent is now used only in the summer. 177 342

[The Dolgan diet now includes bread, flour, and tea, boiled strong and taken with sugar. Supplies are brought in regularly to the local stores. Medical aid is available at 40 medical and medical-assistant points. The Dolgan-Yakut population is served by hospitals at Noril'sk and in the settlements of Chernoye, Volochanka and Khatanga. In 1953 there were 52 schools, including 3 seven-year schools, in the Taymyr National Okrug. The Dolgan-Yakut population is served by schools at Chernoye, Dolgany, Volochanka, Kheta, Khatanga, Popigay and other points. 177 262 743 871